



STATE OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

A Message from the Governor:

Throughout history, many dedicated Americans have taken up the mantle to fight for freedom and ensure liberty for all. On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and slaves in Union-occupied areas of Confederate states still in bondage and ruthlessly oppressed became free men, women, and children, whose inalienable right to liberty would no longer be snuffed out by the cruel hand of slavery. Two and a half years later, in June of 1865, more than two thousand federal soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Texas. Granger's men marched throughout Galveston delivering the news of liberation and the newfound potential for a brighter future for all citizens. It was from that moment that Juneteenth was born.

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration recognizing the end of slavery. As we reflect on it 157 years later, let us not only celebrate the progress we have made but also reaffirm our commitment to the work started by President Lincoln. He understood that change was necessary to move forward as a united nation, and his effort to ensure that our God-given, inalienable rights were equally recognized in all citizens remains the bedrock of American society today, reminding us that no challenge is too difficult to overcome by working together. The important work now falls on the shoulders of present-day Americans to acknowledge and learn from the mistakes of the past and to lead our country by working together as one nation.

Thanks to the dedicated work of Texas' Black community and the many supporters of this great initiative, the recognition of Juneteenth has also grown. Al Edwards, a Black state legislator, was essential to Juneteenth becoming an official Texas state holiday in 1980, the first commemoration of emancipation accorded official state recognition. In order to continue the work set in motion by President Lincoln, Representative Edwards, and countless others, we must champion love, understanding, and respect while remaining steadfast in the fight against hatred, prejudice, and racism.

Today, I encourage all Texans to come together in celebration of Juneteenth, to reflect on our shared history and the freedom this holiday represents, and to join together in working toward a brighter future for all. As Juneteenth's message of empowerment spreads across Texas and beyond, there is no doubt the Lone Star State's future will be fortified with freedom, equality, and opportunity.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Abbott".

Greg Abbott
Governor